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What's New in the Old Testament?

Matthew 22:29-40

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Text: Matthew 22:29-40; Jesus replied, "You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God. At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven. But about the resurrection of the dead - have you not read what God said to you, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not the God of the dead but of the living. When the crowds heard this, they were astonished at his teaching.

Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?

Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

We find in the Old Testament real truth that was overlooked for many years--truth about our relationship with God and with each other.

One of the most popular TV programs today is the "Antique Road Show." Several well-known appraisers set up shop in a city's convention center, and all the locals bring their stuff--all the things that were forgotten and tucked away in the attic or garage. Things like grandma's china, a piece of pottery, or something we picked up at a garage sale. Bygone treasures that may hold hidden value. These antique appraisers check the quality and rarity of the item and place a value on it. The interesting and amazing thing is that sometimes what seems worthless actually is quite valuable. Many people are pleasantly surprised at the true value of their stuff.

Last Monday, I personally experienced this in a somewhat different way. We decided to clean up the garage. I had boxes we had not unpacked since we moved to California over four years ago. I discovered precious artifacts our children had made when they were little small handprints of Sam and handmade cards from Heather. Then, I found two diaries that I had kept--one from 1987 and the other, 1991. As Jeanine and I read these daily notes from that time period, we rediscovered things about our lives we had forgotten--truths about our family and some of the trials we were going through that had slipped from our present consciousness. The Word of God is a lot like my experience here. We have read God's Word; but unless we live God's Word daily, we forget it. It just slips from memory.

Do you remember the story of King Josiah? He was eight years old when he came to the throne as King of Judah. As a young man, he commissioned repairs to the Temple, which had gone through many years of neglect. While the workers were making these repairs, someone found a book--the Book of the Law. When the king heard the words of this book read aloud, he tore his robes in anguish. The people had forgotten God's Word and had drifted off course. But, when this young king heard God's Word, he changed his life, his whole way of thinking and renewed his commitment to the Lord. According to II Kings 23:3, the following commitment was made to describe his devotion to the Lord, "with all his heart and all his soul." Just as Jesus said in Matthew 22, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This, the Matthew passage, is a quote from Deuteronomy 6:5 and the command, "Love your neighbor as yourself," is a quote from Leviticus 19:18.

God's Word changes lives whether it is from the Old or New Testament. Consider the story of Phillip. God had just transported him to the corner of Gaza highway and First Street and along came this royal chariot carrying an official of the Ethiopian court. He just happened to be reading Isaiah 53 when Phillip asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" The Ethiopian says, "How can I understand unless someone explains it to me?" You know, Phillip did not have the New Testament in his back pocket. He took Old Testament passages and explained the truth about Christ. These passages foretold the coming of the Messiah:

- **His birth in Bethlehem in Micah 5:2**
- **born of a virgin in Isaiah 7:14**
- **of the family line of David in Jeremiah 23:5**
- **of being betrayed by a friend in Psalm 41:9**
- **sold for 30 silver coins in Zechariah 11:12**
- **crucified in Zechariah 12:10**
- **having no bones broken in Psalm 34:20 and Exodus 12:46**
- **His clothes taken by casting lots in Psalm 22:18**
- **buried in a rich man's tomb in Isaiah 53:9**
- **being raised on the third day in Hosea 6:2**
- **There are more than 125 prophecies proving that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the Messiah.**

Yet, people everywhere are searching for the truth. There is something within all us which causes us to seek after God. There is a spiritual void that can only be filled by His Spirit. I serve both the officers and inmates at the Sheriff's Office. From time to time, I get request slips from the inmates at the county jail who want to know, "With so many religions claiming to be right, how do you know which one to follow?" One told me that they didn't want to get involved in the wrong one and end up on God's bad side.

People search for some kind of secret message or a long lost document that will put to rest all our questions about who God is and what do we need to do to find him. Joseph Smith was looking for some new secret word that world fill this spiritual void; Mohammad also searched and found a secret word he thought was from God. But these searches ended in leading people away from The Way. So how do we know which is the correct way, the real word of God? All we need to know God is already available to us. We can find the truth and that truth will set us free from all our doubts and suspicions.

I believe God has given us all we need to know in His Word, the Bible. There is no lost or secret document that will point to the truth. We have the truth and that truth will set us free from this doubt and futile search. In the passage we read today for our text, Jesus said to the Sadducees, "You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God." Most of our confusion about which way to turn for Spiritual truth comes from the fact that we do not know the truth of God's Word, or we do not give God's Word a chance.

Jesus did not come to start a new religion. As recorded in John 3:16-17, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned."

In the Old Testament in the book of Ezekiel chapter 37, there is a story about Ezekiel being taken to a valley. As he looked over the valley there is a large pile of old, dry bones. The Lord asked him, "Son of man, can these bones live?" Ezekiel was very couscous and replied, "O Lord God, You know." Then the Lord told him to preach. As he preached the Word of God the bones began to move and tendon, blood vines and flesh started to form over the bones. 'Them old bone came alive'. When God's Word is read and preached people become alive spiritually. Do not neglect God's Word as the people of King Josiah time. It is life giving and spiritual renewing.

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